

# Mechanical Equipment Screening

Appearance Code and Design Guidelines







# Mechanical Equipment Screening Design Guidelines

## Intent

This document describes a user-friendly process for business and building owners to install well-screened, mechanical equipment and/or planting materials to screen mechanical equipment and other utility hardware.

## Definition

**Mechanical Equipment:** Equipment, devices, and accessories, the use of which relates to water supply, drainage, heating, ventilating, air conditioning, and similar purposes. When mechanical equipment is located in the rear of a building, its visibility should be minimized where practical with a good faith effort to keep it out of the view of the public. However, when mechanical equipment is located in the public view, such as near a public sidewalk, the equipment must be hidden or screened from public view.

## Process

### **Screening for generators and other types of mechanical equipment require:**

- Building Permit (Inspectional Services)
- Certificate of Appropriateness (Planning Administrative Approval)

A Building Permit is reviewed, approved, issued and inspected by the Inspectional Services Division for all new mechanical equipment in the Village. Landscaping and screening is reviewed, approved and issued by the Planning Division. Approvals must be issued prior to the beginning of any work.

Applications and the design guidelines are available from the Planning & Economic Development Department, at 847-904-4340, or on the Village's website: [www.glenview.il.us](http://www.glenview.il.us).

*Telecommunications equipment* are governed separately through Section 78-4 (c) *Appearance Commission* of the Municipal code.

## Planning Approval Process - Design Guidelines

The design guidelines contained in this document provide guidance for the design of landscaping and screening. Staff will review the proposal for consistency with these design guidelines.

If staff does not find the proposal appropriate within the design guidelines, the petitioner can request approval from the Appearance Commission. The Appearance Commission would then review the proposal for consistency with the Design Guidelines and determine if a Certificate of Appropriateness should be issued. In order to vary from these Design Guidelines, the petitioner will need to demonstrate extraordinary circumstances.

Appearance Commission meetings are held the first and third Wednesdays of each month.



**A good example of mechanical equipment being screened year-round by evergreen plantings and solid fencing. It is protected from vehicles by concrete bollards and vents away from the landscaping to protect the plants.**



Appearance Code  
Section 54-64

**Mechanical Equipment**

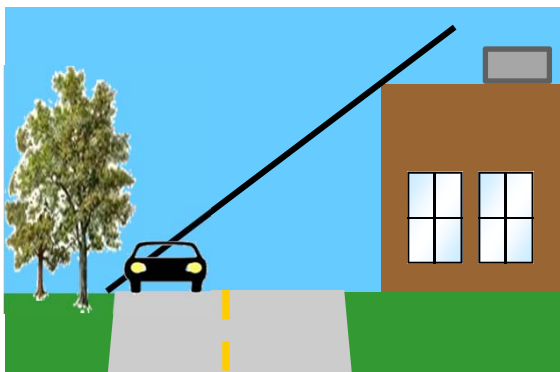
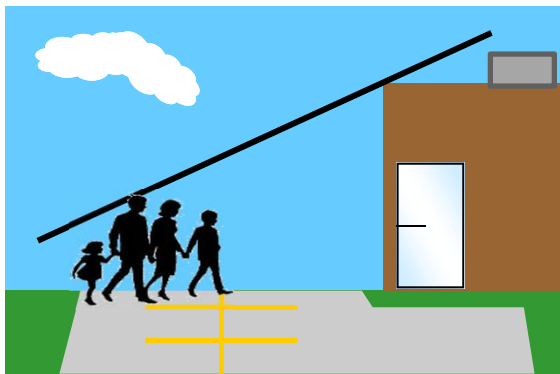
Mechanical equipment or other utility hardware on roofs, ground, or buildings shall be screened from public view with architectural and/or landscape materials harmonious with the building, or they shall be located so as not to be visible from any public ways.



With a properly designed screen, equipment can be well hidden in the winter months.



An appropriately designed screen hides roof-top mechanical units from the view of the parking lot and the public right-of-way.



Dumpsters and utilities are suitably screened in a parking lot with an architectural wall, solid metal gate and a mixture of landscaping materials.



## Design Guidelines

### Roof and Building-Mounted mechanical equipment

#### (1). **Compatibility**

The screening materials surrounding the equipment should be compatible with building architecture (materials, color, scale, etc.). When appropriate, live landscape materials can be used on the building, using the guidelines from the plant materials section, as detailed in page 4.

#### (2). **Sight line visibility**

The degree of visibility from all adjacent public ways will be evaluated. There should be minimal visibility of the equipment from a pedestrians' view. The effectiveness of the equipment screening should also take into consideration future development in the surrounding area.

#### (3). **Utility hardware**

All utility equipment (vents, stacks, gas and water meters, etc.) and associated protective materials (bollards, etc.) should be screened or painted so as to blend in with the roof or building. Fencing or screens must be a minimum of 5' from meters to allow for maintenance. Means should be taken to avoid highly visible roof venting equipment. Use of material screening in similar color to roof would be a good solution to comply with standards.

ok



(1). Mechanical units are screened from the view of the parking lot using awning fabric to blend with the mansard roof.



(2). Equipment is shielded from the right-of-way with a masonry structure attached to a parking garage.



(3). Utility equipment is painted to blend with the building.



(2). Brick piers, evergreen screening and a decorative wood gate screen a large generator.

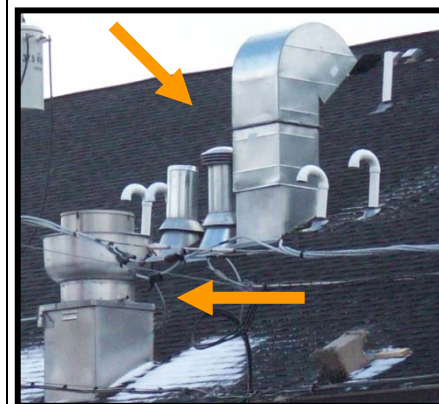
no



(1). These mechanical units could be blocked from public view with compatible architectural screening.



(1). Use of a screening wall in a similar color to the façade would better screen the generator.



(2 & 3). Roof-mounted vents are clearly visible to adjacent residences. Painting the vents to match the roof could be a possible solution.

## Design Guidelines

### Ground-mounted mechanical equipment

Architectural elements, year-round landscaping if appropriate, or a combination of both, may be used to screen ground mounted mechanical equipment.

#### (1). **Compatibility**

Screening materials should be compatible with the building architecture (materials, color, and scale) and with the surrounding landscape.

#### (2). **Plantings**

##### (a). **Quality and maintenance.**

Using a variety of year-round live plant species is ideal when screening equipment. Use plant species that are capable of withstanding northeastern Illinois climates. Maintenance of the plant materials used for screening is required. When landscaping is planted, there should be room provided for access to equipment and for plant maintenance, substrate should be included and the plants should not be in close proximity to exhaust.

**(b). Size and scale.** When using landscaping to screen equipment, plants should be arranged with a minimum of 50% opacity at the time of installation. Ideally, the installed plants should grow to fully screen or shield the equipment.

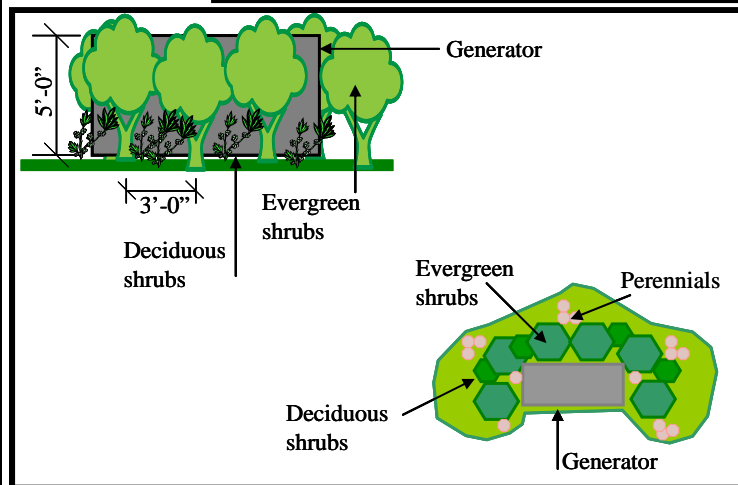
##### (c). **Location**

There should be little to no view of the equipment from pedestrians' view. The degree of visibility from all adjacent public ways will be evaluated. The existing view of equipment should also take into consideration future development in the surrounding area.

ok



- (2). Evergreen screening surrounds mechanical equipment on a minimum of three sides.



- (2). Illustration of a mix of landscaping from an aerial view and an eye-level view to screen a generator located on the ground.

no



- (1). Screening materials should be compatible with the building architecture, rather than draw pedestrians' attention to the screen.



- (2). Landscape materials should screen the equipment and be planted to ensure their survival.